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ABSTRACT

This report studies the feasibility of several alternative quadrimester programs for year-round schools and attempts to determine if adoption of such a schedule would be beneficial for the Lafayette Parish school system. In addition to a discussion of the probable educational impact of various quadrimester programs, the author presents an analysis of the anticipated economic costs and benefits of a quadrimester program for the Lafayette Parish schools. The author concludes that, although a quadrimester program will save money in the long run, it will require a short-term increase in school expenditures. The public must therefore be educated about the long-term educational benefits of a quadrimester program, he suggests, if such a program is to be accepted. (JG)

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A REVIEW OF THE QUADRIMESTER PROGRAM WITH COST ESTIMATES FOR A PROPOSED QUADRIMESTER PROGRAM FOR THE LAFAYETTE PARISH, LOUISIANA, SCHOOLS

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF TABLES	iv
LIST OF FIGURES	v
Chapter	
I. INTRODUCTION	1
THE PROBLEM	1
Statement	1
Importance of the Study	2
DEFINITION OF TERMS	3
Quadrimester Program	3
"F" Terms	3
Year-Round School	3
DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY	3
II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE	4
THE FIVE-YEAR QUADRIMESTER PROGRAM	10
Transitional Quadrimester Program	11
THE FOUR-YEAR QUADRIMESTER PROGRAM	12
THE THREE YEAR QUADRIMESTER PROGRAM	13
THE QUADRIMESTER PLAN IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	13
III. PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE DATA	17
COST FOR LAFAYETTE PARISH QUADRIMESTER PROGRAM	17

Chapter Page

IV. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS 22

SUMMARY 22

CONCLUSIONS 23

BIBLIOGRAPHY 25

VITA 26

LIST OF TABLES

Table		Page
1.	Estimated Percent Decrease in Total Net Expenditures for a Quadrimester Program for the Lafayette Parish School System . . .	20
2.	Estimated Decrease in Total Expenditures for a Quadrimester Program for the Lafayette Parish School System	21

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure		Page
1.	A Sample Calendar for a Quadrimester Program for 1969-70	7
2.	Student Flow Pattern in a Five Year Quadrimester Plan	10
3.	Flow of Students Through a Transitional Quadrimester Program (Grades 7 to 12) . . .	11
4.	The Four Year Quadrimester Flow Pattern . . .	14
5.	The Three Year Quadrimester Flow Pattern . .	15
6.	Elementary School Quadrimester Flow Pattern	16
7.	The Reduction in a School's Enrollment Through the Use of a Quadrimester Plan . .	18

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The practice of a long summer vacation during the school year had its origin in our earlier agrarian life when children were needed on the farms during the planting and harvesting seasons. Also during this period, the demands for organized educational experiences were less insistent. Children developed an understanding of community life through actual work experiences, rather than by attending school. June, July, and August--these are the months when most school plants are closed and standing idle. These are the months when a million teachers are out of work or temporarily employed. These are the months when millions of children throughout the nation have time on their hands. This is traditional.

THE PROBLEM

Statement of the Problem

The traditional school year is denounced by some as failing to utilize fully the community's school facilities and equipment, the pupils' time, and the teachers' professional expertise. The almost universal practice of leaving school facilities idle at a time in our history where every available resource is needed is being carefully re-examined

and debated. There is an ever-increasing number of children, and a shortage of financial resources, facilities, and personnel to meet the needs of these children. Social and economic changes are increasing the demands placed on all of our schools. Therefore, more pupils must be provided more education. The level of educational attainment of every student must be brought to the highest possible level for his potential. A variety of vocational offerings must be provided the approximately fifty percent of pupils who do not go beyond high school. There is also a widely recognized need to improve the economic and professional status of teachers. The quadrimester plan would provide a solution to these problems, and make fuller use of our school facilities.

Importance of the Study

Extended school year plans can provide communities with the extra classrooms and special facilities needed to expand present programs. The lengthened school year can provide a more desirable learning environment to children receiving only part-time schooling or working in overcrowded or obsolete classrooms.

Extended school year plans offer a basis for more quality education and added educational opportunities for all children. They can have particular impact on disadvantaged children through the provision for extra instructional time that is needed for their success in academic and non-academic fields.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Quadrimester Program

A Quadrimester Program is a lengthened school year in which there are four quarters or quadrimesters of 51 to 55 days each. In this program, all students attend school for all of the four quarters.

"E" Terms

This refers to extra terms during a given sequence of grades. These "E" terms enable the student to broaden his curriculum, take a longer time to complete regular courses difficult for him, and build up backgrounds in fundamental skills.

Year-Round School

This term is used inter-changeably with Extended School Year, to mean a lengthening of the traditional nine-month school year.

DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study was limited to a study of the quadrimester program. No research was done into other extended school year programs. Consequently, there is no basis for comparison with other year-round school plans. Rather, this is a thorough study into the feasibility of a quadrimester program, with particular application to the Lafayette Parish School System.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The American Association of School Administrators states that they "...propose to work for--AN EXTENDED USE OF ALL SCHOOL FACILITIES FOR EDUCATIONAL AND RECREATIONAL PURPOSES."[1]

The quadrimester program is one form of extended school year plans that has been offered as a means of more fully utilizing the school facilities. This plan is based upon the division of a longer school year into four equal quarters or quadrimesters. This program differs from most four quarter plans in that pupils are not given the choice of working through three quarters and then having an extended vacation. Each student is expected to continue through school for the full four quarters. Under this plan, the school year would be divided into four quarters of approximately eleven weeks each. This would keep the students in school for approximately forty-four weeks each year, with a two week Christmas vacation and a summer vacation of six weeks. Thus a student would attend school 1100 days over a five-year period as opposed to the 1080 days he now attends

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[1]American Association of School Administrators, Year-Round School (Washington: National Education Association, 1960), back of title page.

during six years under the present plan. This would mean that the six elementary grades could be completed in five years.[2]

Such a plan could reduce the calendar years required to complete the public school program from twelve years to ten. Two alternatives could result from this: 1) Students would enter college or the labor market two years earlier than at present; 2) The age of entering school could be changed from six years to seven. The students would then graduate from secondary school only one year younger than at present.[3]

Average and better-than-average learners could complete the equivalent of a normal 180 day course in three quadrimesters. This is done through a lengthening of class periods to equalize instructional time. If a student does complete a course at the end of the second or third quadrimester, the school must be prepared to offer new courses which will meet his educational needs.

The quadrimester calendar calls for the division of an extended school year into four equal segments ranging from 51 to 55 days in length. The ideal calendar would give students and teachers a week's recess at the end of the first,

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[2]University of the State of New York/The State Education Department, Extended School Year Designs: An Introduction to Plans for Rescheduling the School Year (Albany: The University of the State of New York, 1966), p. 53.

[3]Florida Educational Research and Development Council, Year-Round Schools for Polk County, Florida: A Feasibility Study (Gainesville: The University of Florida, 1966), p. 14.

second and third quadrimesters. In order to preserve traditional holiday recesses plus a longer summer vacation, educators favor a school calendar similar to the one in Figure 1.[4]

A minor adjustment in the length of class periods is needed if one wants to equalize time with that of the traditional two-semester year. The following time adjustments are recommended:

Year Length	Quarter Length	Recommended Period Length	Potential Increase
220 Days	55 Days	49 Minutes	4 Minutes
216 Days	54 Days	50 Minutes	5 Minutes
212 Days	53 Days	51 Minutes	6 Minutes
208 Days	52 Days	52 Minutes	7 Minutes
204 Days	51 Days	53 Minutes	8 Minutes

This program need not lead to a lengthening of the school day. Two alternatives are recommended: 1) The number of class periods may be reduced from eight to seven or from seven to six; 2) A modification of luncheon arrangements, homeroom plans, and/or activity periods may provide the extra time needed to avoid the lengthening of the school day. Should neither of these alternatives be acceptable, then the school day will have to be lengthened.[5]

Many colleges and universities have adopted a form of trimester or four quarter organization in an attempt to offer a continuity to their programs and to save space.

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[4]USNT/SED, Extended School Year Designs, p. 55.

[5]Ibid., p. 61.

Figure 1

A Sample Calendar for a Quadrimester Program for 1969-70*

Month	Day	Legend	Days of Schooling	
		Quadrimester I		
September	3	School Open for Students		
October	6	No School-Teachers' Conference	23	
November	11	No School-Veteran's Day	25	
November	18	Last School Day in Quad. I	5	
		No. of School Days in Quad. I		53
		Quadrimester II		
November	19	First Day of Quad. II		
November	27-28	No School-Thanksgiving Recess	6	
December	23	Last Day of School Before Start of Christmas Recess	17	
December-January	24-4	Christmas Recess		
January	5	School Reopens After Christmas Recess		
February	13	Last School Day in Quad. II	30	
		No. of School Days in Quad. II		53

Figure 1 -- Continued

Month	Day	Legend	Days of Schooling	
		Quadrimester III		
February	16	First Day of Quad. III		
March	26-27	No School-Easter Break	28	
May	1	Last School Day in Quad. III	25	
		No. of School Days in Quad. III		53
May May	2- 10	No School-Spring Recess		
		Quadrimester IV		
May	11	First Day of Quad. IV		
May	29	No School-Memorial Day Holiday	14	
July	3	No School-Independence Day Holiday	24	
July	24	Last School Day in Quad. IV	15	
		No. of School Days in Quad. IV		53
		Total No. of School Days in 1969-70		212

*Quadrimester Calendar may provide a week's vacation between each quarter, to give teachers and students an essential break between work periods.

Unfortunately, they have often had to cope with the problem of unbalanced enrollment during the third or fourth terms. In an attempt to eliminate this problem in the elementary and secondary schools, the concept of an "E" term was devised. Through the use of a designated number of "E" terms, the enrollments for a given term are equalized.

The "E" term can take on many meanings. "E" can stand for extra education. It can refer to enrichment opportunities or excellence in education.[6] With good guidance, pupils can plan more effective programs through the flexibility that "E" terms provide. Students who have one, two, or three extra terms of education in three, four, or five years can obtain more education without having to give up as much of their summers as they would if they attended summer school. The "E" terms will help many pupils pace their way through school, allowing them to derive more from courses they take and enabling them to add courses otherwise closed to them due to the lack of sufficient terms.[7]

The slow learning student may lighten his daily class load by deferring some courses for the "E" terms, making sure he learns each step well before he takes the next. Pupils who have failed subjects may make up lost work without overloading their programs. Similarly, pupils may use the equivalent of an "E" term to enable them to enter a college in

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[6]USNY/SED, Extended School Year Designs, p. 11.

[7]Ibid.

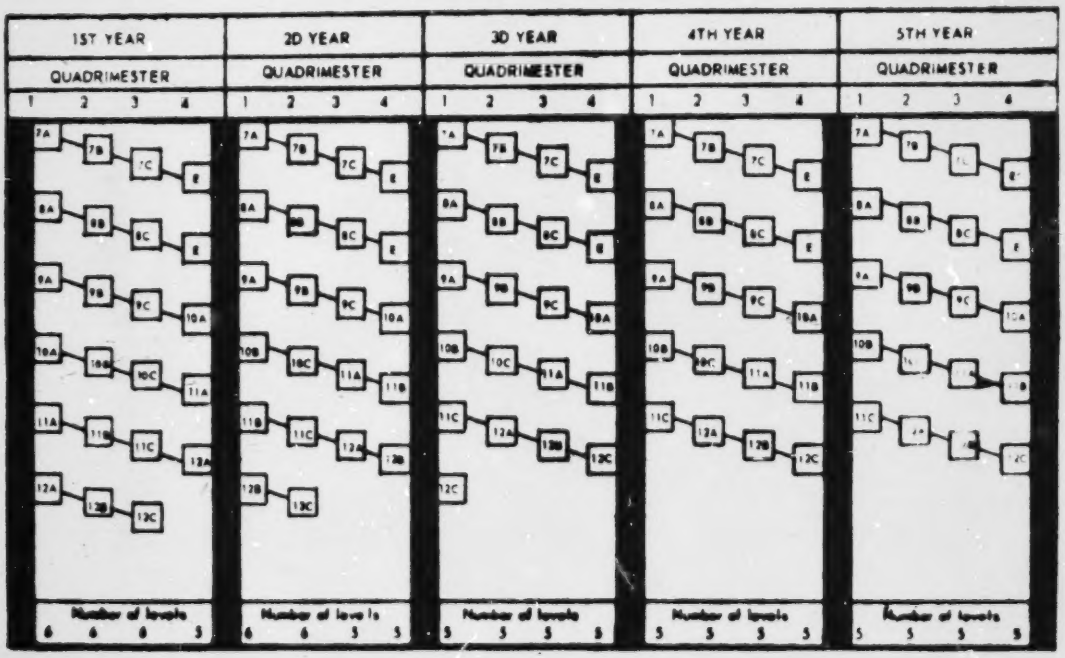
the spring term which may be the only time openings are available.

THE FIVE-YEAR QUADRIMESTER PROGRAM

The five-year quadrimester design refers to an extended school year plan which will enable students to complete six full years of schooling in five lengthened school years. In addition, the pupils have the advantage of two "E" terms to help them pace their instruction and to engage in enriching and/or broadening activities. Figure 2 shows the flow pattern of the five-year quadrimester program.[8] In studying this figure, the reader should keep in mind that pupils in

Figure 2

Student Flow Pattern in a Five Year Quadrimester Plan



[8] Ibid., p. 54.

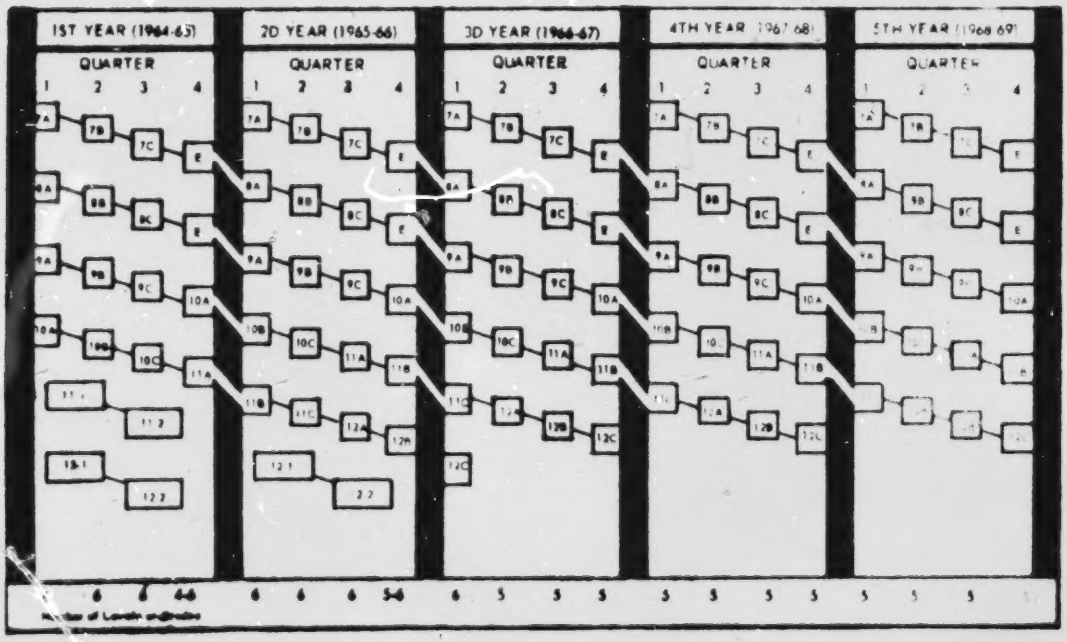
grades eight to twelve are in a transition period. Consequently, they do not have the advantage of the "E" terms shown for the first class to complete the full five-year quadrimester program.

Transitional Quadrimester Program

Figure 3 shows a flow chart which has the eleventh and twelfth grades remaining in the traditional two-semester program, while the other four grades are going through the quadrimester program.[9] This is a less expensive program to start with than a program which has them going through three regular quadrimesters plus an "E" term during each

Figure 3

Flow of Students Through a Transitional Quadrimester Program (Grades 7 to 12)



[9]Ibid., p. 57.

school year. This chart shows six student levels in each of the first three quadrimesters, but there are only five levels or grades to be taught in the fourth quadrimester due to the early twelfth grade graduation. With the input of a new 7A class, the school begins with six levels. The graduation of the second twelfth grade class at the close of the second quadrimester results in a temporary reduction in enrollment and staff at the end of the sixth quadrimester. The new organization takes over completely at the end of quadrimester nine, with the result that the school has only five levels or grades to be taught during subsequent terms.

THE FOUR-YEAR QUADRIMESTER PROGRAM

The four-year quadrimester program is a variation which enables average or better-than-average students to complete five full years of school in four lengthened school years. Figure 4 shows the flow of students through this program.[10] The students can complete five full years of secondary school in four calendar years. They will also have the advantage of one "E" term to help pace their progress or to take enrichment or elective courses. The reduction in school enrollment takes place at the end of quadrimester nine. At this time, the new flow pattern becomes permanent and the five-level school reduces to four levels.

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[10]Ibid., p. 58.

THE THREE-YEAR QUADRIMESTER PROGRAM

The three-year quadrimester program will help students finish four full years of schooling in three lengthened school years. Figure 5 shows the progress of the first ninth grade class.[11] The pupils in the 9A class move diagonally across the chart until they graduate at the end of the third extended school year. In this plan, the pupils do not have the advantage of an "E" term. Consequently, they have less opportunity to take enrichment courses. Students who fail subjects must take extra courses or work through additional quadrimesters. The permanent reduction in school enrollment takes place at the end of quadrimester nine, when the four-level school reduces to three levels.

THE QUADRIMESTER PLAN IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

The quadrimester plan has been developed for secondary schools, but it lends itself easily to an elementary school organizational pattern. The concept of continuous progress will help pupils and teachers adjust to the new time elements found in lengthened school year programs. An elementary school can operate efficiently and effectively without a quadrimester program. However, school administrators and teachers find this plan helpful. It provides them

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[11] Ibid., p. 59.

Figure 4

The Four Year Quadrimester Flow Pattern

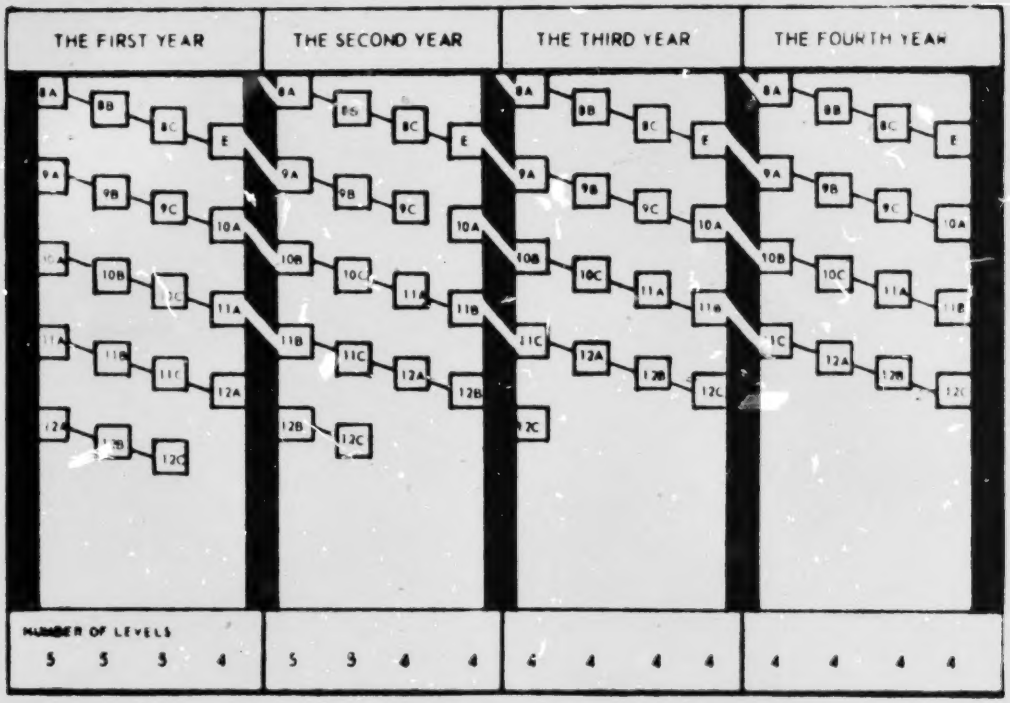
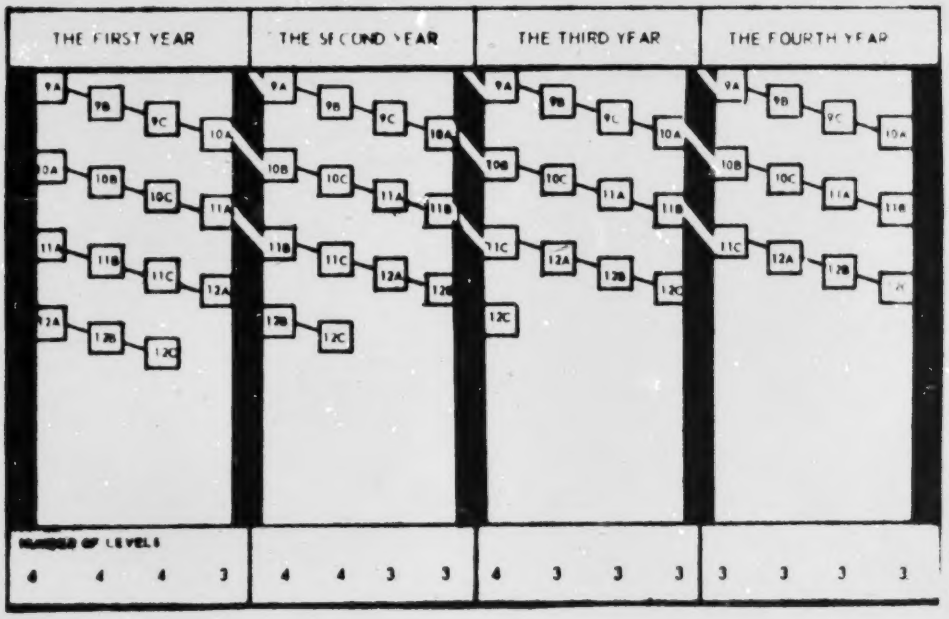


Figure 5

The Three Year Quadrimester Flow Pattern



with guideposts and possible transfer points, particularly in terms of readiness for new learning levels. Figure 6 depicts what a quad-imester plan means to boys and girls in an elementary school.[12] The students can complete the seven year elementary school program in the six extended school years. Students also have the equivalent of three "E" terms to help them over hard spots, or to enrich and broaden their educational background before they go into the secondary school. The reduction in school enrollment takes place at the end of quadrimester nine, when the seven levels permanently reduce to six.

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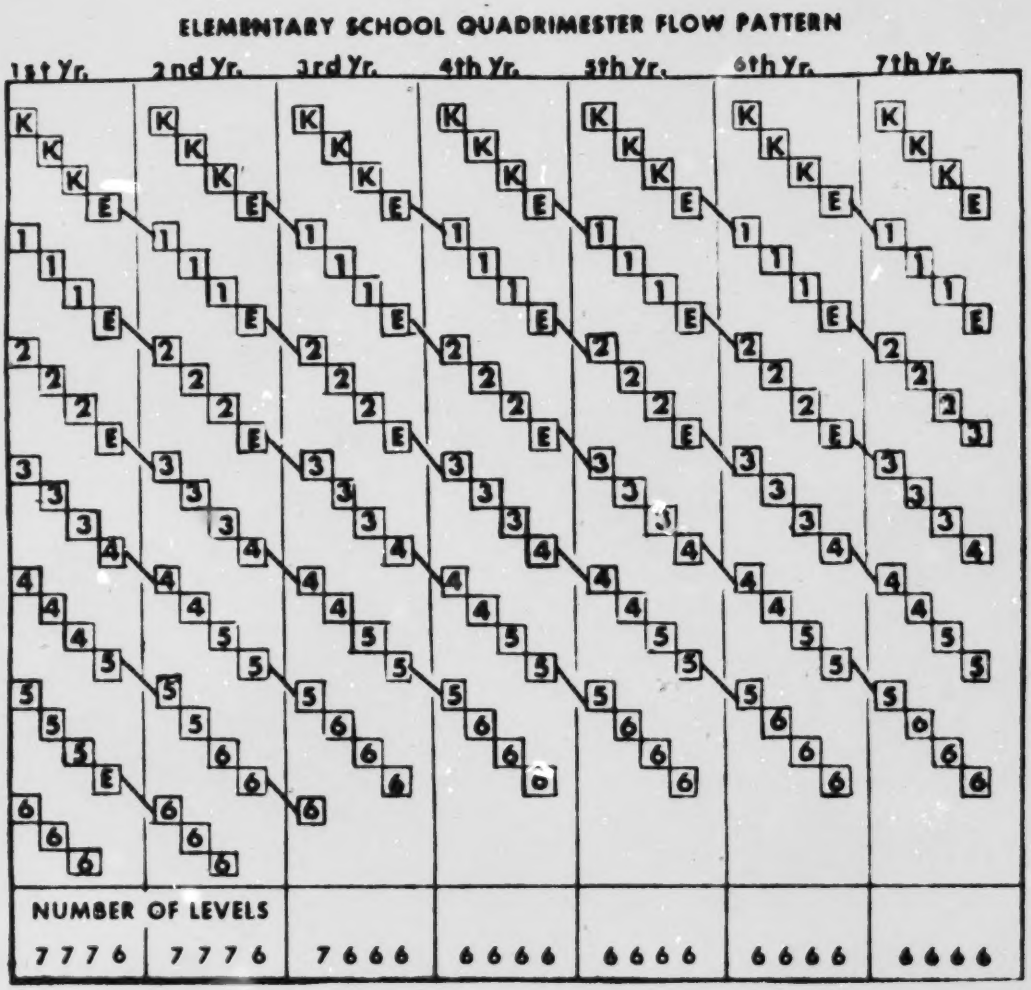
[12] Ibid., p. 59.

Figure 6


ELEMENTARY SCHOOL QUADRIMESTER FLOW PATTERN
1st Yr.
2nd Yr.
3rd Yr.
4th Yr.
5th Yr.
6th Yr.
7th Yr.
NUMBER OF LEVELS
7 7 7 6
7 7 7 6
7 6 6 6
6 6 6 6
6 6 6 6
6 6 6 6
6 6 6 6

CHAPTER III

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

Research was done to determine the feasibility of the adoption of the quadrimester program by the Lafayette Parish School System. Particular consideration was given to financial costs. The results of this research will be presented here.

COST FOR LAFAYETTE PARISH QUADRIMESTER PROGRAM

School enrollment theoretically could be reduced 16 2/3 percent under the quadrimester plan, but the schools would operate longer. Figure 7 shows the reduction of a school's enrollment under the quadrimester plan.[13] Teachers employed under the quadrimester plan would have to be paid twenty percent more, but the number of teachers could be reduced by 16.7 percent. It is assumed that 1/8 of the instructional staff is already employed on a twelve-month basis under the present plan. Using this assumption, payments for instructional salaries could be reduced 2.5 percent.[14]

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[13] Ibid., p. 66.

[14] Florida Educational Research and Development Council, p. 37.

Figure 7

The Reduction in a School's Enrollment Through the Use of a Quadrimester Plan

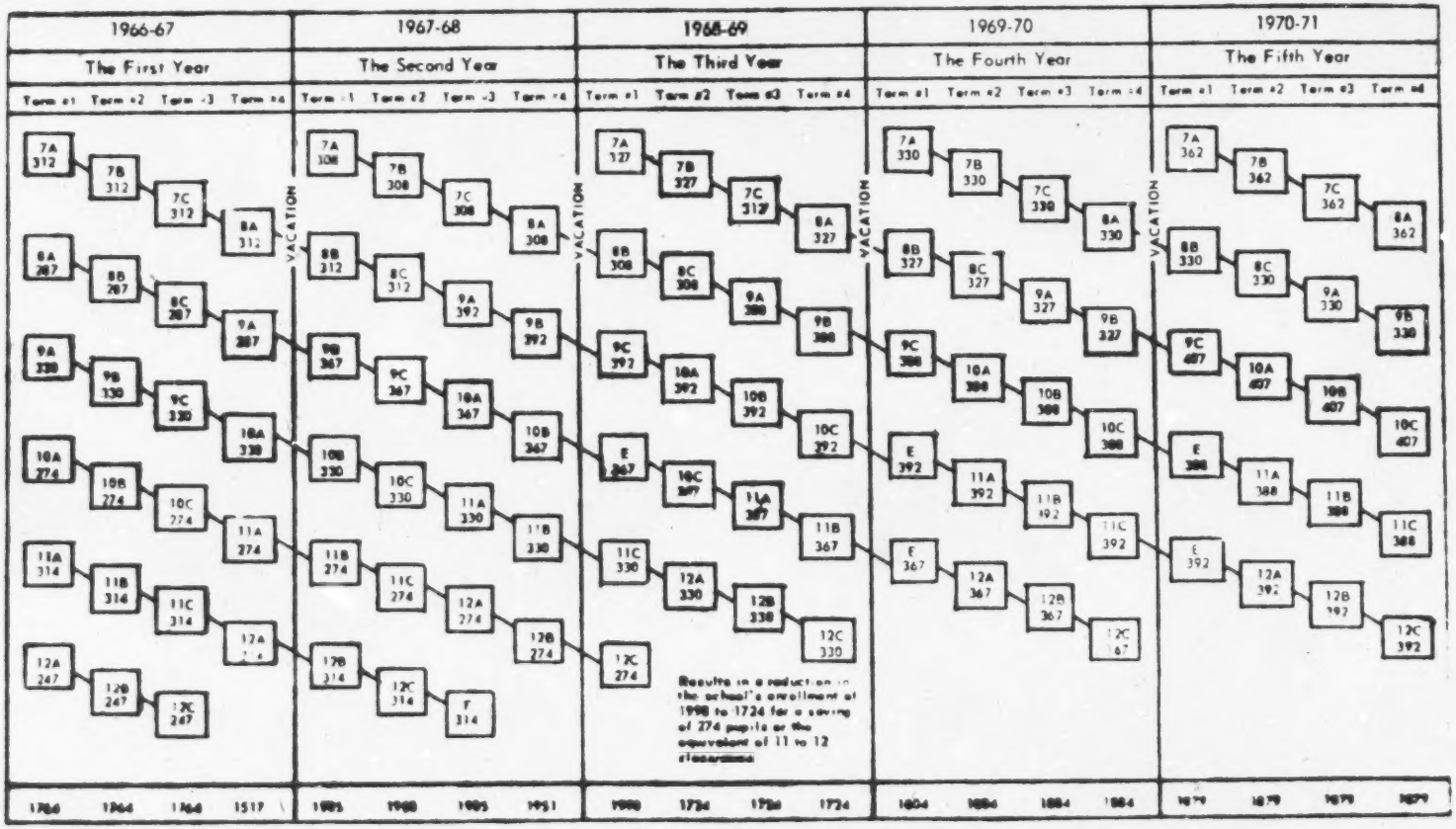

Table 1 shows that the net total of school expenditures could be reduced approximately 2.90 percent under the quadrimester plan. Expenditures for capital outlay, fixed charges and maintenance of buildings could probably be reduced by 16.7 percent because of that anticipated reduction in student enrollment. Operation and auxiliary agencies could not be reduced because the reduction of 16.7 percent of students served would be accompanied by a twenty percent increase in length of service.[15]

Table 2 shows that the total expenditures of the Lafayette Parish School System could be decreased by approximately $339,000.00 under the quadrimester plan. As stated above, operation and auxiliary agencies could not be reduced, but other expenditures could be reduced by the amounts shown.[16]

Five years would have to elapse before any reduction of costs would be realized and ten years before the full 2.90 percent reduction obtained. It would require an annual immediate increase of approximately 10.1 percent to inaugurate the quadrimester plan. This annual increase would decline to less than one-half of that amount after five years, and after ten years there shouldd be a reduction of approximately 2.90 in net expenditures. At this rate, it would take approximately twenty-five to thirty years to regain the money spent in initiating the quadrimester program.

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[15]Ibid.

[16]Ibid.

Table 1

Estimated Percent Decrease in Total Net Expenditures for a Quadrimester Program for the Lafayette Parish School System

Function	Percent of Total Net Expenditure Under Present Plan	Estimated Percent Decrease for Quadrimester Program	Estimated Percent Decrease In Total Net Expenditures
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Administration	2.1	0.00	0.00
Instruction	75.8	- .025	-1.90
Operation of Plant	6.4	0.00	0.00
Maintenance of Plant	2.6	- .167	-0.43
Auxiliary Services	9.3	0.00	0.00
Fixed Charges	3.3	- .167	-0.55
Capital Outlay Costs	0.1	- .167	-0.02
Unclassified Items	0.3	0.00	0.00
			-2.90

Sources:

Column 2: General Fund Budget of Expenditures, 1969-1970 Fiscal Year, Lafayette Parish School Board, Lafayette, Louisiana, March 18, 1970.

Column 3: Florida Educational Research and Development Council. Year-Round Schools for Polk County, Florida: A Feasibility Study. Gainesville: The University of Florida, 1966.

Column 4: Multiply Col. 2 by Col. 3.

Table 2

Estimated Decrease in Total Expenditures for a Quadrimester Program for the Lafayette Parish School System

Function	Budget 1969-1970 Fiscal Year	Estimated Percent Decrease for Quadrimester Program	Estimated Decrease In Total Expenditures
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Administration	245,751.84	0.00	0.00
Instruction	8,946,552.70	- .025	-223,663.82
Operation of Plant	742,575.00	0.00	0.00
Maintenance of Plant	303,100.00	- .167	- 50,617.70
Auxiliary Services	1,093,334.00	0.00	0.00
Fixed Charges	380,962.09	- .167	- 63,620.67
Capital Outlay Costs	4,500.00	- .167	- 751.50
Unclassified Items	32,615.68	0.00	0.00
	11,749,391.31		-338,653.69

Sources:

Column 2: General Fund Budget of Expenditures, 1969-1970 Fiscal Year, Lafayette Parish School Board, Lafayette, Louisiana, March 18, 1970.

Column 3: Florida Educational Research and Development Council. Year-Round Schools for Polk County, Florida: A Feasibility Study. Gainesville: The University of Florida, 1966.

Column 4: Multiply Col. 2 by Col. 3.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

SUMMARY

The purpose of this study was to review the quadrimester program, and to determine whether the adoption of such a program would be beneficial to the Lafayette Parish School System. The writer found the basic objectives of the quadrimester program to be as follows:

1) To improve the quality and quantity of education.

2) To expand or broaden the curriculum for a segment of the school population.

3) To provide social contacts and educational experiences to students who would normally be summer isolates.

4) To minimize the loss referred to as the academic summer slump.

5) To save one year of a pupil's school life line in order that he could use it more effectively at a later stage in his development.

6) To shorten the chronological years of schooling for the average and above-average learners in order that school districts may reduce enrollment, thus releasing classroom space, teachers, and classroom dollars.

7) To attract more highly qualified teachers through the inducement of an extra month's salary.[17]

Under the quadrimester program, superior students are able to progress at a pace commensurate with their ability, and the slow pupils can make up work in a shorter length of time. Retardation is decreased and early elimination is minimized. Long review periods are unnecessary. All school facilities are used continually. Healthy minds and bodies are maintained in useful occupation in the best setting the community can supply. Teachers are given the opportunity to better their economic position.[18]

CONCLUSIONS

While the objectives and advantages of a quadrimester program are indeed noteworthy, the reader must keep in mind that although this plan will save money in the long run, the immediate result of initiating such a program will cost the school system--and thus the taxpayer--money. It will take twenty-five to thirty years before the economic benefits of this program will be fully realized. More economic utilization of our resources can be achieved by adopting the quadri-

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[17]University of the State of New York/The State Education Department, Setting the Stage for Lengthened School Year Programs (Albany: The University of the State of New York, 1968), p. 21.

[18]Grace S. Wright, The All-Year School (Washington: U. S. Office of Education, May, 1958), pp. 2-3.

mester program. However, the public must be educated as to the long-term benefits of such a program. Even then, it is doubtful whether the people would be accepting of such a program. Tradition is a hard thing to change, particularly when it involves spending money to get the program started.

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